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ABSTRACT

To describe existing placement services of public 2-year colleges in New York, questionnaires were mailed to the chief placement officer of 40 colleges, and on-site visits and interviews were held with placement officers of seven colleges. Returned questionnaires from 36 placement officers plus the interview data revealed that: (1) A total of 35 chief placement officers had some graduate training, with the most frequent area of specialization being student personnel administration, (2) Only six officers had any on-th-job training or supervision, (3) Most of the students who utilize the placement service do so to find permanent or part-time jobs, (4) Of the 35 colleges, 20 made no special efforts to serve the placement needs of minority students, and (5) Fourteen colleges mentioned cooperative efforts in placement with other colleges, most of which were in the form of visits to other campuses and discussion of common problems. Recommendations were made concerning the need for adequate administrative support, providing on-the-job training, increased cooperative efforts, and conducting evaluation research on placement. (SB)

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# Placement Services in New York State Two-Year Colleges

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# PLACEMENT SERVICES

# IN

# NEW YORK STATE TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

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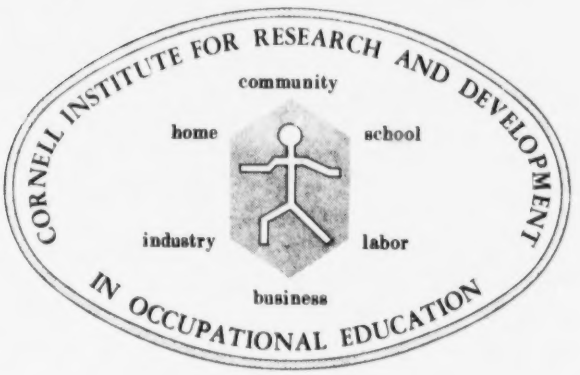


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## FOREWORD

The comprehensive mission of the two-year community college is reflected in the findings of this report: nearly half of the students in the thirty-six two-year colleges covered by this study were enrolled in career programs. The community nature of the institution is reflected in the findings that a mean of 72% of the student body live within 20 miles of the college attended, and that a mean of 63% of the students finding permanent employment do so within 20 miles of the college.

The implications for participation by community colleges in the design and development of community manpower delivery systems are challenging. Many have laid the groundwork for such involvement; much remains to be done. Does ultimate accountability for that 50% of the college's effort in career programs lie with successful placement of the graduates of those programs? Some will argue the point. We will counter with more questions. What are the student's expectations? Does the student have a right to expect learning experiences that are closely related to employer's expectations? Does the employer have a right to expect that the community college will respond to the community's manpower needs? Are all parties--student, college, employers--tuned in on the same line of communications?

None of these are easy questions. Would a well-developed

college placement service be able to help a community toward development of a better manpower delivery system?

This descriptive research effort by Dr. Dalva E. Hedlund, Assistant Professor of Occupational Psychology and Guidance and David H. Brown, Graduate Research Assistant does not attempt to answer our questions. It does provide a first, and much needed, data base from which we can discuss next steps in the development of more effective placement services. There are strong clues in the data; forthright requests in the interview responses; subtle inferences in the role descriptions. We doubt that you will feel any more complacent than we do after you have completed your study of this document.

The Cornell Institute for Research and Development in Career Education extends appreciation to Dr. Hedlund and Mr. Brown for dedicated efforts that far exceeded the minimal financial support that the Institute could provide.

Dr. John Wilcox, Director

## Preface to the Revised Edition

This is a summary report of A Description of Placement Services in New York State Two-Year Colleges, mimeographed in August, 1972. The original research report included the research questionnaire and summary statistics of all responses. It was felt that a more concise report of the study, the present edition, would present the findings of the study in a more interesting format.

Dalva E. Hedlund

# CHAPTER I

## Statement of the Problem

Placement is generally accepted as a necessary, if not crucial, element in any institution providing career education. Placement in the two-year college is even more important than in other institutions. With the dual goals of service to the student and service to the community, placement represents the interface of the purposes of the two-year college.

Several models for the placement function have been developed. Rarely, however, have they been empirically evaluated. Blocker (1966), for example, argues that placement is crucial to any effective occupational education program. Elements of the placement model he advocates include cooperative participation of faculty and counseling personnel; coordination of both cooperative (a functional relationship between formal study and work experience) and non-cooperative part-time work experiences; public relations with community employers; contribution to curriculum development by facilitating communication between occupational faculty, counseling personnel, and business and industry personnel; and continuing placement services to graduates of the institution's career programs.

Elements of other models of the placement function include career counseling, maintenance of an occupational information library, and educational programs ranging from an introduction to a

specific job to instruction in appropriate interview behavior (Eastern College Personnel Officers, 1964).

There is ample evidence that the post-secondary occupational student has difficulty making vocational choices (Cross, 1968). Much of this difficulty, at least for two-year college students, appears to relate to unreal vocational aspirations (Panos & Astin, 1967; Trent & Ruyle, 1965). This confusion even appears among secondary school occupational education students. McCowan and Mongerson (1971) found that more than half of the male graduates and almost one-third of the female graduates sampled in a study of 1969 graduates of New York secondary school vocational programs were employed in areas other than those they studied in their occupational education program. In a survey of 4,009 students completing their second year in two-year colleges in 1967 and planning to find full-time employment the next year, Baird, Richards, and Shevel (1969) found that 35.1% of the students had not yet begun to even seek employment.

Perhaps the placement function could be performed more efficiently? In a study of counseling and related functions in New York public two-year colleges (Hedlund, Bail & Nelson, 1968) it was found that about one-fourth of the students sampled did not believe their colleges provided any career information and over one-third of the students sampled had no knowledge of a placement function

at their college. Included in the same study was an evaluation of specific counseling services in two-year colleges by counselors themselves. Responses of 111 counselors in New York two-year colleges to two rating categories for selected placement counseling items are summarized in Table I. It is evident that the counselors saw a need for improvement in placement services.

Table I

Counselor Ratings of Placement Counseling Services in New York State Two-Year Colleges (N=111) (Modified from Hedlund, Bail & Nelson, 1968)

| Service | Not Performed | Entirely Inadequate |
|---|---|---|
| Administration and Interpretation of Interest Tests | 23% | 10% |
| Use of Tests for Special Vocational Skills, such as Mechanical Aptitude or Dexterity Tests | 57% | 13% |
| Interpretation of Skills and Special Abilities Needed for Particular Occupations | 16% | 13% |
| Providing Occupational Information such as Books, Pamphlets, Statistics, and the Local and National Employment Outlook | 9% | 14% |
| Liaison with Local Business and Industry Employment Representatives and State Employment Service | 10% | 13% |

The study of the placement function is complicated by the almost complete lack of empirical research on placement services. The Hedlund, Bail, and Nelson study touched upon, but did not concentrate on placement activities. This lack of research is clear. For example, during the last four years not a single article on placement has appeared in the Journal of College Student Personnel. Much work is being done in specific areas of vocational counseling, but usually not in relation to the overall placement function. The evident lack of, and a need for, research on placement in the two-year college led to the design of the present study.

The "placement function" was defined for this study to include, but was not necessarily limited to, all practices and procedures related to career counseling, placement counseling, aptitude and interest assessment, providing career information, soliciting position notices and contact with prospective employers, relations with state and federal employment agencies, soliciting and maintaining student and graduate employment application materials, projecting local manpower needs, program evaluation research, and coordinating applicant-employee contacts.

The purpose of the study was to describe existing placement services of public two-year colleges in New York.

## Procedures

A letter was sent to the Dean of Students in 42 of the public

two-year colleges in New York State requesting the participation of their college in the study. Of the 42 colleges contacted, 40 Deans responded positively by furnishing the name of the individual responsible for placement on that campus. One college indicated it was just instituting placement and declined to participate in the study.

A questionnaire covering the areas of placement listed in Table II was constructed from a review of placement literature, a logical analysis of the placement function in the two-year college, and consultation with two placement directors. Questionnaire items were generated in a forced-choice format wherever possible to provide comparability of data between colleges. Open-end items were necessary in many instances, however, to provide for the variety of responses expected. The questionnaires were completed by the placement director or other individual responsible for the placement function at each college.

Questionnaires were mailed to colleges in April, 1972. Follow-up postcards were mailed two weeks later. Personal phone calls were placed to non-respondents after the third week from the original mailing. Thirty-six of the original forty questionnaires were returned, resulting in an 89% response rate.

Table II

Organization of Areas of Information
Within the Placement Questionnaire

| Number of Items | Area |
|---|---|
| 43 | Educational and Professional Background of Chief Placement Officer |
| 4 | The College: General Information |
| 11 | Placement Services: General Information on Location, Staffing and Operation |
| 11 | Placement Services as they Relate to the Student Body |
| 9 | Placement Services as they Relate to the Minority Student |
| 7 | Part-Time Job Placement |
| 6 | Permanent Job Placement |
| 2 | Placement Folders (copies of forms utilized were requested) |
| 10 | The Relationship of Placement to the Rest of the College |
| 6 | The Relationship of Placement to the Community |
| 2 | Placement Services as they Relate to Government Agencies |
| 3 | Miscellaneous: Cooperative Efforts; Innovations; Comments |

It was determined that an on-site visit and interview with placement directors would be necessary to collect certain types of data for a relatively complete description of placement services. Four graduate students were trained in interview procedures while an interview schedule was constructed. Interviews were conducted by two interviewers to facilitate written recording of responses as well as to assure flexibility in interview questions to gather unique information about each college. Complete interviews took approximately two hours. It was evident that on-site interviews with each placement officer participating in the study were not feasible. Therefore, it was decided to pick a sample of colleges from those which appeared to offer the most complete placement services on the basis of returned questionnaire responses. Returned questionnairs were rated independently by three judges resulting in 12 of the participating colleges rated as "most complete". From these, seven colleges were picked for interviews to represent the geographic areas of New York State and to represent both Community Colleges and Agricultural and Technical Colleges.

Interview data are not included in this report except where general impressions amplify or support data from the questionnaire. The interviews yielded such extensive information that further analysis is required.

The following chapter is a presentation and discussion of the descriptive questionnaire data. Chapter III contains recom-

mendations drawn from a consideration of the results.

Limitations

The study is purely descriptive in nature, with no comparisons of any variables or attempts to establish causality. Conclusions which may appear to the reader are extrapolations of the data by the authors.

All of the data were collected or estimated by the cooperating chief placement officers. Therefore, the results are accurate only to the extent that the respondent was initially accurate in his response.

Although 36 colleges participated in the study, the number of responses to any given item is usually less than 36. In instances where there is a large proportion of non-respondents to an item, the results may represent a biased description of the total sample.

# CHAPTER II

## Discussion

The diversity of the different placement services represented at the colleges in the sample is reflected in the wide variety of job titles of the chief placement officer. At only 10 colleges does the placement officer have responsibilities solely in the area of placement. At the remaining 26 colleges, the job title indicates responsibilities in everything from financial aids to student activities.

Thirty-two of the chief placement officers indicated they had some form of graduate training. The most frequent area of specialization was student personnel administration (N=8), with Guidance (N=4), Counseling and Guidance (N=3), and Educational Administration (N=3) the next most frequent areas. Masters degrees were held by 25 respondents, and two held doctoral degrees. Of the 36 placement officers responding, 16 had taken a supervised practicum during graduate study but only two individuals had emphasized placement during the practicum experience and only five had a two-year college practicum. Most placement officers in the sample have been in their present job a relatively short time (mean of 3.5 years, with a range of 1 - 25 years). The most frequent job route to a placement position was through some form of college administration (N=11), with secondary teaching and private employment agencies the next most frequent previous positions

(5 each). A majority of the respondents have participated in at least one placement-related workshop, usually of about a week in duration. Only three individuals reported graduate course work in business, while most course work taken was in the counseling-guidance areas. In evaluating their graduate study, respondents most frequently mentioned counseling courses (N=10), supervised practicum (N=8), and occupational education courses (N=7), as "most valuable" in relation to their current job assignments. History of higher education (N=5), and statistics (N=3) were most often mentioned as "least helpful."

Only six placement officers of the 36 had any on-the-job training or supervision. For further training, 29 individuals requested specialized workshops, and 13 indicated that additional formal course work (mostly in career development and counseling/psychology) would be helpful. It seems obvious that in-service training is an area which needs attention from the two-year colleges, professional organizations, and training universities.

Most of the placement officers in the study belong to the Middle Atlantic Career Counselors Association (21), with few memberships in national placement or student personnel associations. When asked with which professional association they were most closely identified, MACCA was far ahead with 13 supporters.

## The College: General Information

The colleges in the sample varied greatly in size, ranging in total enrollment from 750 to 18,000. Thirty colleges had an enrollment of 8,300 or less, with the remaining six colleges enrolling 10,000 or more. The bimodal nature of this distribution should be kept in mind when interpreting the summary statistics. The mean total enrollment of the 36 colleges was 4,985. Of this total, about one-half were full-time students ($\bar{x}$ = 2,850), about half were part-time night students ($\bar{x}$ = 2,012), and few were part-time day students ($\bar{x}$ = 237). Nearly half of the students in the participating colleges were enrolled in a career program ($\bar{x}$ = 2,067), a figure emphasizing the importance of adequate placement services at these colleges.

A mean enrollment of 711 minority students was somewhat misleading since many of the larger colleges had a very high proportion of minority students (the range of the reported number of minority students was from 5 to 6,400). The largest group of minority students was Black ($\bar{x}$ = 514), with Spanish-surname students the next largest group ($\bar{x}$ = 157). There was a very small American Indian population represented ($\bar{x}$ = 9, range of 0 - 107).

An average of about 800 students used the placement services of each college during the past year, most of them full-time students ($\bar{x}$ = 667). More than half of these students using

the placement services were in career education programs ($\bar{x}$ = 445). However, a large proportion of students utilizing the placement service were in transfer programs ($\bar{x}$ = 247). In other terms, in the typical two-year college in New York last year, about 23% of the full-time students took advantage of the existing placement services, and about 3% of the part-time night students used these same services. Likewise, approximately 23% of the students enrolled in career education programs used the placement services. The proportions of minority students using placement services were almost the same as those proportions among the general student population.

The large number of transfer students using the placement service could indicate that many transfer students become concerned with finding employment, either part- or full-time, or it could show that the placement service also includes transfer counseling. Both conclusions are partially supported by the results. Fourteen of the 36 colleges include transfer counseling as part of placement and 32 colleges assisted students in finding part-time employment.

True to the "community" college concept, a mean of 72% of the student body was reported to live within 20 miles of the college attended. Students in the Agricultural and Technical Colleges came from a more widely distributed area as would be expected

in specialized institutions. Interestingly, it was reported that a mean of 63% of students finding permanent employment do so within twenty miles of the college, indicating little mobility among graduates and service to the local community.

Placement Services: General Information

There was a mean of 277 faculty members (190 full-time and 87 part-time), and 18 student personnel staff in the participating colleges. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of professional and clerical personnel working in placement and to estimate the percentage of their working time spent on placement activities. There was a mean of 1.9 professional, 1.0 secretarial, and 0.21 student staff members reported. All together, the personnel in placement ($\bar{x}$ = 3.1) spent a total of 170% of their possible 310% working time in placement. This is a further indicator of the part-time nature of placement services among two-year colleges in the sample.

Among the 36 colleges a total of eight minority persons were reported employed in placement: five professionals, one secretary, and two student aides.

There was no clear trend reported concerning the location of placement services. Fourteen placement officers were located in the administration building of the college, four were in classroom buildings, and four were in student centers. In the other

thirteen colleges responding to this item, placement was usually located in multi-purpose buildings or shared space with other student personnel services. It would be interesting to know how the mere physical accessibility of the placement office affects its use by students.

All of the respondents kept files of company catalogs, general career information and current job announcements, and government job announcements. About half of the placement officers had files of college catalogs, reflecting the fact that transfer counseling is not a placement function in many of the colleges.

Placement officers were asked to estimate the percentage of their time spent in various functions, considering the total time in placement as 100%. The summary figures do not total exactly 100%, nor do all placement officers perform all of the functions cited, but an average placement officer would spend his time as follows: career counseling, 19%; finding jobs, 19%, office administration, 15%; transfer counseling, 13%; educational functions such as advising students how to approach an interview, 12%; contacting students, 11%; and college committees, 4%. Obviously, many of the categories overlap and could be estimated in various ways. It is interesting, though, that the only category which did not have a single 0% response was office administration, where the lowest time estimate was 1%. Evidently, individual placement

officers define their professional roles rather idiosyncratically, with little agreement across colleges on what aspects of the job are emphasized.

Most of the two-year college students who utilize the placement service do so to find either permanent jobs ($\bar{x}$ = 35.3%), or part-time jobs ($\bar{x}$ = 33.6%). Thirty-one colleges offered career counseling, which an estimated 13% of the students using the placement service took advantage of. The forms career counseling took were disseminating career information (30 colleges, double checked as performed most often by 11 colleges), bringing community people in different fields on campus (checked by 26, double checked by 4), vocational guidance (checked by 26, double checked by 6), personnel counseling (24 colleges, double checked by 6), and instructional programs, such as how to take an interview, etc. (23 colleges, double checked by 1). Interest testing was performed as part of placement at 16 of the colleges, and aptitude testing at 11 colleges. Eleven colleges were also involved in psychological education programs of some type, double checked by four colleges. It is evident that career counseling in some form is seen as a major placement function at most of the colleges, in spite of the fact that 30 of 34 colleges indicated that career counseling was also offered elsewhere on campus, usually in the counseling center or by individual counselors. The close interrelationship

between career and personal counseling was given further substantiation by those placement officers interviewed.

Transfer counseling was offered as a part of placement services at 14 colleges. Most often, transfer counseling took the form of dissemination of educational and transfer information (N=12), educational guidance (N =12), personal counseling (N-11), and bringing representatives of four-year colleges on to campus, (N=11). Thirty-two respondents indicated that transfer counseling was offered elsewhere at their college, usually at the counseling center or its equivalent.

Placement Services as They Relate to the Student Body

Communication of placement information to students is one critical placement task. When asked what means are used to acquaint students with placement services, every respondent to the item (N=35) indicated the use of some form of bulletin board, and most utilized the school newspaper (N=30), posters (N=28), word of mouth (N=28), class visitation (N=27), and placement bulletins (N=25). Although no comparisons were made, future studies could investigate the relationship between different means of communicating with students and the use and success rate of the placement services.

Thirty-five colleges were involved in a work-study program. Most of these programs are designed to find on-campus employment

for students in need of financial assistance (N=30). However, a large proportion also indicated that their programs seek jobs in the community (N=24), and jobs which are related to the student's occupational goals as a regular part of the curriculum (N=20). The work-study program was administered by financial aids personnel at 26 of the 35 responding colleges, indicating an area of functional overlap between placement and financial aids.

Alumni had access to the placement services at 35 colleges, and students who dropped out of an academic program could use the placement service at 33 of the 36 colleges. An average of 111 alumni were reported to use placement services at each school, while only 52 "dropouts" did so. With the two-year college's commitment to developing the potential of the student and the relatively high attrition rates of students, it would seem that placement services for the student who does not graduate should be an area of concern.

Feedback from students on the effectiveness of placement services was obtained informally through occasional comments from students from 31 of 35 responding colleges, and more formally through questionnaires by 29 colleges. Only one college reported no effort to obtain feedback from students. Efforts to obtain follow-up data after the student has begun work were made by 23 colleges. Of these, 19 used a questionnaire to the student

and six also sent a questionnaire to the employer. The interesting figure here is that 12 of 35 responding colleges do not attempt to obtain follow-up data on their graduates. This would seem to severely limit the extent to which a placement service could evaluate its own effectiveness, and to limit the extent to which a college could evaluate the effectiveness of its occupational curricula. Twenty-four colleges indicated that course offerings in occupational areas were affected to "some" extent by input of graduates of those areas. Two colleges stated that input from graduates had "extensive" effect. Eight colleges stated that there was no effect at all. The interviews with placement officers pointed out that lack of time, personnel, and administrative support for evaluative efforts were prime factors in not collecting more extensive evaluative data. It was also clear that evaluating placement and occupational curriculum effectiveness is simply quite difficult. There is no standard methodology nor clearly defined success variables to measure, and there is a lack of persons trained in evaluative research in the two-year college.

Bearing on the importance of adequate evaluative research and the feedback of data to the curriculum planning process, eight colleges cited one of the difficulties encountered in placing students was that students were not trained for the types of jobs available in the locality. It would seem that if two-year colleges were true

to the philosophy of serving the needs of the community the curriculum should be sensitive to both the present and projected skill requirements of the community. Seven placement officers found that two-year college students were not competitive with others in the job market, another possible curriculum fault but probably a reflection of the fact that the data were collected during a declining job market. "Limited job opportunities" was mentioned as a problem by 33 colleges.

Placement Services as They Relate to the Minority Student

Of the 35 colleges responding to this item, 20 made no special efforts to serve the placement needs of minority students. Fifteen colleges cooperate with special programs for minority students such as E.O.P. programs. Nine colleges made special efforts to cooperate with minority student organizations, and nine colleges cooperated with minority faculty members for placement. Of the special efforts for minority students, it was felt that cooperation with special programs such as E.O.P. was most effective in placing minority students at two colleges, the assistance of minority faculty was most effective at one college, having minority staff members in the placement office was effective at one college, and cooperation with private employment agencies dealing specifically with minority placement was effective at one college. "Effectiveness" in this context was undefined, and could mean a variety

of things from success in communicating with minority students to actual numbers of positions filled. No distinction was made in the evaluation efforts to place minority and non-minority students at 19 of 32 responding colleges. This is consistent with the previous figure of no special minority placement efforts at 20 colleges. Twelve colleges made no attempt to evaluate the success of minority placement efforts, and nine colleges relied on random feedback from students. When asked to estimate their success in meeting the placement needs of minority students, 13 placement officers checked "good", 8 checked "fair", 3 "excellent", and 1 "poor". In elaborating on their success with minority students, those placement officers who thought they were doing a good job mentioned such factors as favorable comments from minority students, identical treatment to that given non-minority students - such as undiluted coursework, and small numbers of minority group members in the student body. Those placement officers who thought they were doing a fair job mentioned the tight labor market, resistance on the part of minority students, and the fact that numbers of minority students were too small to generate meaningful data. Overall, as for the total enrollment, a relatively small proportion of minority students use available placement services. The major reason stated was that many minority students enroll in transfer rather than career oriented programs.

Placement officers in the sample were asked to estimate their "success rate" in placing minority students in both permanent and part-time positions (the percentage of students using placement services who find employment as a result of the services). For permanent positions, eight colleges reported the success rate at less than 20% and six more than 80%. For part-time placement of minority students, seven colleges reported a success rate of less than 20% with four more than 80%. The reported percentage of minority students who attempt to transfer to a four-year college and are successful ($\bar{x}$ = 73.6%) was approximately the same as that for non-minority students ($\bar{x}$ = 74.3%).

A determining factor in the responses to the section of the questionnaire dealing with minority students is the distribution of minority students throughout the system: large numbers of minority students at a few urban colleges with most upstate colleges having almost no minority representation in their enrollment. In most cases this low proportion of minority students reflects the small minority population in the area from which the college draws its students.

## Part-Time Job Placement

Part-time job placement was included as part of the placement services at 32 of 35 responding colleges. In addition, at 16 of 33 colleges the faculty regularly assisted students in finding

part-time employment. Part-time job listings were actively solicited at 18 colleges, mainly through correspondence with area businesses. Files of students seeking part-time work were maintained by 20 colleges. Students were informed of part-time job listings by means of a bulletin board at 29 colleges, and 24 placement services personally notify students as listings come in. Nineteen colleges had some type of screening procedure before sending part-time job applicants to an employer, usually performed by the chief placement officer.

It was estimated that 10% or less of the full-time enrollment seeks part-time employment at 10 of the colleges in the sample. Less than 40% of the full-time enrollment sought part-time employment through the placement service at 24 responding colleges, and none reported more than 60% seeking part-time work. Ten placement officers did not estimate their success rate in placing students in part-time positions. The remaining 25 who could estimate this success rate were almost evenly distributed between 20% and 80%. Eleven placement officers were satisfied with their performance in the part-time job area and 11 were dissatisfied, with 14 not responding to the item.

Permanent Job Placement

Initial contacts with employers are most often a result of the employer contacting the placement officer (N = 35). When

this initial contact is the result of initiative on the part of college personnel, it most often occurs as a result of letters to the employer (N = 31), telephone calls to the employer (N = 27), occupational faculty bringing employers and placement personnel together (N = 21), or interviews at the employers place of business (N = 20). The most commonly used procedures for placing students in full-time jobs were providing interview space for student-employer meetings (N = 33), listing new job openings on a bulletin board (N = 32), arranging meetings between the student and employer (N = 32), soliciting job listings from employers (N = 29), and contacting employers on behalf of a particular student (N = 26). Less than half of the placement services in the sample (N =17) provided student placement folders to employers upon their request or at the placement officer's initiative (see section on placement folders below).

Placement officers were also asked to estimate their "success rate" (the percentage of students using placement services that find positions as a result of those services) for permanent job placement. Five colleges estimated a success rate of less than 20%, and 15 estimated a rate less than 50%. Seven colleges placed more than 80% of the students using placement services. Seven colleges did not answer this item, possibly due to lack of data.

An average of 72.6% of graduates of occupational curricula

were estimated to find entry-level positions utilizing their training. This figure is undoubtedly affected by the poor job market, but also reflects earlier comments about graduates not being trained for the types of jobs available in the area. It is probable that the proportion of graduates utilizing their college training in their work is even smaller two or three years following graduation.

## Placement Folders

Student placement folders were maintained by 24 colleges. These folders are kept on file following graduation by 23 colleges for periods ranging from six months to several years. Access to placement folders is allowed to college officials (N = 18), prospective employers (N = 17), and the student himself (N = 10). Fourteen placement officers allow access to folders only to those persons designated by student.

## The Relationship of Placement to the Rest of the College

In the organizational structure of the colleges in our sample the chief placement officer usually reports directly to the Dean of Students (N = 27), and the Dean is usually the only one who must approve programs affecting placement services. Ten respondents said the Dean of Students was also in an advisory capacity to changes or innovations in placement services, while seven stated that no one was in ad advisory capacity to placement. Other persons and

groups mentioned more than once as having an advisory function were the student body, "almost anyone," faculty, financial aids, other student personnel staff, Vice President for Student Affairs, advisory councils, and department and division chairmen.

The Chief Placement Officers served on a variety of boards and committees. It is interesting, however, that only ten respondents served on a curriculum committee, an academic standards committee, or an academic policy committee. This lack of membership on major college committees was reflected in the earlier estimate of distribution of work time, where it was found that the typical placement officer spends only 4.4% of his time on committes. Furthermore, twelve placement officers report that course offerings in occupational areas are not affected at all by input of placement personnel. Most placement services (N = 28) do provide occupational faculty with information on the success of their graduates, but the nature (or quality) of that information was unspecified.

It was reported that placement and faculty cooperate "extensively" at 13 colleges in placing students, and to "some" extent at 21 others. Faculty members alone place students extensively at five colleges and to some extent at 26 others. Only three colleges said that faculty members, by themselves, do not place students at all.

The Relationship of Placement to the Community

The majority of the placement officers surveyed (N = 19) belonged to no community groups, at least in their capacity as chief placement officer. Three respondents belonged to their local Chamber of Commerce, and several other groups were mentioned by one individual. Additional groups with which placement officers communicate about placement, but do not belong to, include the local Chamber of Commerce (N = 6), State Employment Agency (N = 3), and various service clubs (N = 3).

Nine colleges (of 34 responding) reported that course offerings in occupational areas were extensively affected by input from business and industry. Some effect was reported by 23 other colleges. Community and regional manpower needs were assessed through personal contact with employers by 29 placement officers from data furnished by the state government (N = 24), through input of individual members of the community at 18 colleges, and 16 placement services had a community advisory group. Evaluation of the success of meeting community needs was obtained by feedback from business and industry at 28 colleges, and from community advisory groups at 11 colleges. Studies were conducted by placement staff at 11 colleges to evaluate the effectiveness of meeting the community's manpower needs, and by college staff outside of placement at 9 colleges. There were, however, seven colleges

which did not attempt to evaluate how well the college met community needs. According to the evaluations made, 5 placement officers feel they have been very successful in meeting community needs, 14 moderately successful, 8 slightly successful, and 1 unsuccessful.

Again, the relative informality and small influence of evaluation data collection procedures is evident. Assessment of regional manpower needs appears to take place mainly by word of mouth, with some reliance on state government manpower projections. Formal evaluation of the college's role in meeting community manpower needs occurs in some form at only 20 of the 36 colleges surveyed. And there appears to be minimal impact on the curriculum by area business and industry, probably because there is no cogent, consistent manner of communicating business needs to curriculum planners.

Placement Services as They Relate to Government Agencies

The government agencies which most affect the placement function at the two-year colleges in the sample are, logically, the New York State Employment Service (N = 13), and civil service agencies at the federal, state, county, and local levels (N = 11). On individual campuses other agencies have some effect. The involvement of government agencies in the placement function consists mainly of providing position openings and registering students

who are seeking employment.

Cooperative Efforts, Innovations, Comments

Fourteen colleges mentioned cooperative efforts in placement with other colleges. Most of these efforts were in the form of visits to other campuses and discussion of common problems--especially the annual meeting of the Agricultural and Technical College placement officers, the periodic meetings of the Western New York College Placement Association, and discussions of possible centralization of placement services among colleges in New York City.

Several exciting innovative programs were being attempted on various campuses. Several placement officers are offering academic credit courses on topics such as vocational explorations and the psychology of work. A Career Resource Center was established at one campus, including a professional career counseling staff and plans for a full set of resource materials for students to work with. Several placement offices are experimenting with the use of videotape equipment for training students in appropriate interview behaviors. Videotape is employed both as a modeling technique to show effective and ineffective behaviors and as a feedback device in role-playing situations.

# CHAPTER III

## Recommendations

The chief placement officers cooperating in the study exhibited a gratifying interest in any research on the placement function. There appeared to be a real desire to receive the results of the study and to cooperate in any further way possible. It is probable that this is a reflection of the general lack of communication among professional placement personnel resulting in a need to know how one's professional role compares to others performing the same function.

The placement officer also appears to be a kind of "marginal" person in the community college, resulting from a lack of clear definition of his professional role. He typically gets into placement without much specialized preparation. He does not have much on-the-job training because there is no one who knows much more about the function than he does when first hired. He usually wears several hats, all of which are critical to the student and to the educational functions of the college; and consequently, has difficulty setting priorities for his limited time and resources which will allow him to meet all of the evident responsibilities of his roles, much less plan and carry out activities which would result in improvement in his services. He does not generally identify professionally with national college student personnel associations. He does not feel

that he is a part of the career education faculty at his college, and he often feels some competition with counseling personnel. And, he is not high enough in the organizational hierarchy of the college to feel he can make a significant impact on the way things are done.

Nevertheless, the placement officer represents "the college" to a wide, and very important, segment of the community; a position which often leads to the well-known salesman's smile and firm handshake which is really a necessity to cover his knowledge that he does not actually speak for anyone with authority. Feeling marginal can be quite crippling.

Administrative Support. It is obvious that not much can be done to improve placement services without adequate support from college administration. Placement should be an integral part of any institution offering career education programs. There should be adequate staff and budgetary support to carry out the placement function with distinction. Moreover, the chief placement officer should be accorded the necessary organizational status to represent the college to the public, to be listened to with respect among college administration, and to interact with career faculty on an equal organizational level.

Training. The first evident need for training is that which occurs on-the-job. Without question, if there is only one professional on the placement staff, and he is newly hired, it is difficult to plan on-the-job training activities. It would still be possible,

though, to formalize monthly time for training activities (ideally for the whole student personnel staff), perhaps requiring placement personnel to create their own learning objectives and training plan.

On-the-job training could focus on learning about the college--its administration, curricula, students, student personnel programs; on the community--business and industry, socio-economic characteristics, government, education, mass communication media; or on substantive aspects of placement--the use of career information, testing in placement, personal counseling techniques, career development theory, the law and the placement function, the design and utilization of standard forms used in administering a placement office. These examples of areas and topics for on-the-job training activities could proceed with outside assistance, such as other faculty in the college or representatives from industry, or could be self-directed by the placement staff. The importance is on a continued staff development effort.

There was an expressed desire among participants in the study for both further formal graduate course work, generally in counseling and in career development, and for specialized workshops on topics in placement. Part of the issue here again is administrative support for attending courses or workshops, and part of the issue is the availability of appropriate experiences. The training universities must be made aware of specialized requirements if

course work is not appropriate. Likewise, specialized workshops could probably be created through many universities if needs were advertised. It seems that professional organizations, such as MACCA, could serve an extremely useful purpose by assessing member needs and either approaching appropriate sponsoring institutions with requests for courses, workshops, or other assistance, or by sponsoring professional development activities themselves.

Cooperative Efforts. Many laudable cooperative efforts are occurring at present. These should be increased. A specific recommendation is the establishment of an annual professional meeting of all two-year college placement staff. Ideally, this meeting would be primarily educational and problem-solving in nature, rather than the show-and-tell tenor of many such professional conferences.

Regional cooperation among colleges to maximize recruiter contacts and placement possibilities is an area which is just beginning to be tapped. Some of the problems which are currently blocking regional cooperation are a lack of standardized procedures and data formats; no communication on a regular formalized basis concerning job openings, recruiter schedules, and characteristics of jobs sought by students; and, unfortunately, a sense of competition among regional colleges.

Evaluation Research. It was evident at several points through the study that evaluation research on placement is lacking and sorely needed. Much of this research is of the type that a placement

staff could, and should, conduct for itself. However, there is also a need for more extensive research involving several colleges or the whole state system. For example, there is the question of adequate staffing of a placement service. The results of this study indicate that most colleges operate placement offices on a skeleton staff. Is it really enough? There is no data on which to make that decision. Are placement services for minority students, part-time students, and dropouts adequate? This study presents some base data, but more research is needed to enable meaningful decisions. Are existing placement services being utilized by students to their fullest extent? Are students finding the assistance they need from placement offices? Are students' skills being utilized in the jobs they accept? Again, this study presents some data to work from, but much more research is needed, both at the local and state levels.

The placement officer should play a key role in the curriculum planning process in career areas by providing meaningful data about regional manpower projections and the experience of recent graduates. Moreover, this kind of data is central to career counseling. Perhaps the priority areas in training, cooperative efforts, in the professional organizations, and in staffing should be to develop substantial research potential.

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Appendix

## Participating Two-Year Colleges

Adirondack Community College
Alfred Agricultural and Technical College
Auburn Community College
Bronx Community College
Broome Technical Community College
Canton Agricultural and Technical College
Clinton Community College
Cobleskill Agricultural and Technical College
Columbia-Greene Community College
Corning Community College
Delhi Agricultural and Technical College
Erie Community College
Farmingdale Agricultural and Technical College
Fashion Institute of Technology
Community College of the Finger Lakes
Fulton-Montgomery Community College
Genesee Community College
Herkimer County Community College
Hudson Valley Community College
Jefferson Community College
Kingsborough Community College
Manhattan Community College
Mohawk Valley Community College
Monroe Community College
Morrisville Agricultural and Technical College
Nassau Community College
New York City Community College
Niagra County Community College
North Country Community College
Orange County Community College
Queensborough Community College
Staten Island Community College
Suffolk County Community College
Sullivan County Community College
Tompkins-Cortland Community College
Ulster County Community College